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PACIFIC MILITARY STRATEGY:

ARE WE MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES?

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by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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# ABSTRACT

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
I STRATEGIC CHALLENGE IN THE ASIAN-PACIFIC.....	1
II COMPETING NATIONAL STRATEGIES.....	2
Former Soviet Union (FSU).....	2
Japan.....	3
North Korea (DPRK).....	5
South Korea (ROK).....	6
People's Republic of China (PRC).....	6
Taiwan.....	8
Philippines.....	9
Vietnam.....	9
Australia.....	10
Malaysia.....	10
Indonesia.....	11
Singapore.....	12
III U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS AND MILITARY STRATEGY.....	13
IV OUR PREVIOUS AND FUTURE ASIAN-PACIFIC STRATEGY .....	14
Pre-1991 Strategy.....	16
Asian-Pacific Strategy of the Future.....	16
Strategic Deterrence.....	17
Forward Presence.....	17
Crisis Response.....	20
Reconstitution.....	21
Burden Sharing.....	22
V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	24
NOTES.....	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	31

THE U.S. PACIFIC MILITARY STRATEGY:  
ARE WE MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES?

CHAPTER I

STRATEGIC CHALLENGE IN THE ASIAN-PACIFIC

With the momentous changes in the balance of world power culminating with the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the U.S. national strategy is now undergoing a significant metamorphosis. These changes in national strategy, in no small way, also reflect the fiscal realities of the U.S. budget deficit situation. The intent of this paper is to critically examine how these changes in national strategy have been translated into policy and force structure in the Asian-Pacific region to determine whether our strategic objectives are being met in the immediate and long term. Such examination processes are perhaps more crucial than ever before. Not because the threat is greater than in the past's bipolar world, but because the threat is less clearly defined and rapidly changing in a world of independent nations with their own national agendas. And we face this challenge with significantly reduced U.S. fiscal assets. Thus our defense policy changes must be made even more wisely and carefully than ever.

To evaluate the U.S. policy in the Asian-Pacific, we will first examine the various national interests in the region to provide insight where we might find policies which complement our own. After bridging from our national interests to our U.S. military strategy, we will look back at our past Asian-Pacific strategy and analyze our strategy

of the future against the four foundations of our strategy and the "supplementary foundation" of burden sharing. Finally, we will assess whether the Asian-Pacific military does support the U.S.'s national objectives, and make recommendations as appropriate.

## CHAPTER II

### COMPETING NATIONAL STRATEGIES

In order to effectively evaluate the U.S. policy in the Asian-Pacific, one must first have an appreciation of the perspectives and self-interests of the various nations within the region. The following analyses is provided as a profile of twelve nations. Admittedly but a surface view, it is provided as a departure point for subsequent discussions.

#### Former Soviet Union (FSU)

The term Former Soviet Union (FSU) vice Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is used in this paper to describe the sum total aspects of all the former republics. Thus the term FSU incorporates the effects of the breakaway republics as well as the CIS on the issues effecting Asian-Pacific regional security.

The FSU is now fundamentally turned inward to solve its many domestic problems. What should not escape anyone, however, is the fact that the FSU is a significant force in the Far East with major national interests in the region. The key FSU objectives in the area are trade to promote their stagnant economic growth, accelerated normalization of relations with China, distancing Japan from the U.S., maintaining

the security of its strategic deterrence systems (most notably the SSBN fleet) and eventually to bring the FSU into a role as a power player in the Asian-Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

The FSU has gone to great lengths in the Pacific to promote trade and relations with many of its former antagonists such as South Korea, Japan, China and Indonesia. These efforts have lead to the backing off of traditional positions, such as the dispute over the eastern SinoSoviet border to accommodate trade concessions.<sup>2</sup> However, contentious issues will remain, none more provocative than the Southern Kurile Islands. Japan has steadfastly argued for the return of the four islands of the Southern Kuriles, referred to by the Japanese as the Northern Territories. During Gorbachev's state visit to Japan in 1991, Tokyo bluntly stated that no massive economic aid or expansion of bilateral trade would be forthcoming unless significant progress was made on the Kurile issue. Gorbachev refused based on (1) the Kuriles being the tactical gateway to his SSBN fleet, (2) the Japanese could not possibly compensate for the mineral resources (titanium, sulfur, sulfide deposits) and fishing grounds, and (3) a self-determination referendum of the inhabitants in which 87% voted against return of the islands.<sup>3</sup> Such intransigent positions will continue to shape the region.

#### Japan

With the curtain having gone down on the cold war, thus ending the bipolarity of world politics, Japan finds itself looking for its new niche as a world leader and, for the first time, placed in the position of having to make difficult decisions.<sup>4</sup> Japan's national objectives are to continue its unprecedented economic growth while taking up a leadership role the rest of the world will accept. These

objectives have translated into military strategies which have included a 1,000 mile defense zone around the mainland as a part of her defense burden sharing, concerns for her oil sea lines of communications (SLOC's) to the Middle East, and her contributions to the new world order, the most notable recent example being Desert Storm and Desert Shield. This latter example clearly points out Japan's internal problems in attaining its leadership position. In November 1990 during Desert Shield, the Prime Minister proposed sending 2,000 Self Defense Force (SDF) personnel to the Gulf as a non-military force to be positioned offshore. On January 18, 1991 the Prime Minister attempted to send a SDF C-130 to Cairo and Amman to evacuate refugees. In each case the Diet, reflecting the divided state of Japanese public opinion, killed the initiatives. It was not until well after hostilities ceased that SDF minesweepers sailed to conduct mine clearance operations in May 91. Fundamentally, Tokyo's Desert Storm/Desert Shield involvement was relegated to financing the coalition effort. This was no small contribution - \$13 billion (20% of the cost of both operations, greater than any other one single country). But what this example demonstrates is the divided attitude of the populace to become a world leader and the government's inability to carry through with their policy decisions.<sup>5</sup> This internal situation coupled with Japan's external problem of all Asian-Pacific nations being deeply suspicious of any display of offensive military capability leaves Tokyo in a problematic position in becoming a world leader. Another factor which will affect Japan's policies is her deep seeded historic distrust of China, the FSU and Korea. While economic trade with these countries continues to flourish, Japan's mistrust of these countries' military intentions will persist.



### North Korea (DPRK)

North Korea finds itself in a precarious position both in the short and long term. In the past the DPRK attempted to insulate itself from the world with the exception of other communist countries, with the PRC and FSU providing significant amounts of trade and subsidies. Pyongyang now finds itself being edged out by the PRC and FSU in favor of the economic advantages of dealing with South Korea. At this juncture, and for the foreseeable future, North Korea's strategy appears to be: (1) reinforcing ideological isolationism (which has included the return to North Korea of exchange students from the FSU and Eastern Europe and placement in re-education camps), (2) asking for aid from the West (Japan to date) to prevent further back sliding of the standard of living and to foster economic growth, (3) exporting advanced weapons and terrorist capability for hard currency, and (4) to "buy time" until the PRC and FSU (in whatever form) return from their reformist interlude back to Leninism.<sup>6</sup>

In recent developments there have been moves to open up both political and economic dialogue with South Korea. Most notably the DPRK has fallen off its "Korea is one" stance which led to both Koreas admittance to the United Nations. Some see this as a beginning of a transformation of the DPRK to a nonsocialist, authoritarian society.<sup>7</sup> Such optimism, however, should be cautiously guarded. The DPRK has continued to balk at nuclear facilities inspections in conformance with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty which Pyongyang signed. And while a reform movement may be presently visible, the heir apparent to power (Kim Jong Il) is a true hardliner who will most likely eliminate

the reformist element once he ascends to power. The strategic point to be taken away is that we have an economically unstable country which has historically backed itself into political isolationism and potentially either has or will have a nuclear weapon and the required delivery system.

#### South Korea (ROK)

Seoul is going through perhaps its most dynamic period ever, short of war. In the foreign policy arena, both Koreas have entered the U.N. and also signed the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and North". A fundamental level of dialogue has been opened reflecting some willingness to negotiate. However, the ROK's domestic situation has regressed due to a slowing economy, and perceptions of deep corruption within the government, both of which have manifested themselves with wide spread demonstrations.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the highly visible American force presence within the capital provides an additional platform for anti-government groups to rally dissension over the issue of sovereignty.

Across the longer term, Seoul remains cautious with regards to the prospects for reconciliation with the North, most notably in view of Kim Il Sung's eventual passing and the ascendancy to power of his son, Kim Jong Il. This concern is underlined with South Korea's apprehension that with the developments in the Former Soviet Union and domestic causes at home, the U.S. may withdraw major forces from the peninsula.<sup>9</sup> And finally, South Korea is always suspicious of Japan, especially in light of her continuing military modernizations.

#### People's Republic of China (PRC)

China's strategic objectives over the last decade have been

and will continue to be : (1) a growing integration into the world economy in support of its ambitious economic plan, (2) promotion of a peaceful international environment, particularly in Asia, to minimize its military expenditures in order to concentrate on domestic affairs and forge economic relations with other nations, (3) stable relations with the two major powers while avoiding alignment with either and pressing both to remove major "obstacles" to improve relationships, and (4) reunification of Hong Kong and Taiwan.<sup>10</sup>

To many the ensuing policies will appear to be inwardly focused. In a large part they are. The PRC must concern itself with modernization to be competitive in the world market. Internal unrest ranging from the reform movement symbolized by Tiananmen to the deep rooted ethnic diversity within a populace of 1.2 billion (notably a large moslem concentration in the West and affected by events in the FSU) will draw upon their finite resources.

However, we must also view the ramifications of these goals in the longer term. While the military is now fundamentally downsizing to a border integrity/internal security force level, this is only due to the refocusing of resources to support basic economic growth. China's ultimate goal is expanded economic interests which will require a greatly enlarged and modernized force.<sup>11</sup> To this end China sees a need to develop a naval force over the course of the next twenty years which will provide them the ability to influence both the South and East China Seas, conceivably out to 1,000 miles. This shift from brown to blue water Navy reflects not only their perceived need to provide secure sea lines of communication for commerce, but also to effect the sovereignty outcome over the disputed islands of the region (Spratly, Paracel and Senkaku

groups) which all offer significant underwater oil reserves. To provide some point of reference; Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia pumped 100 million tons of oil from the Spratly Islands in 1985.<sup>12</sup>

To accomplish this goal, China's projected force structure will incorporate an expanded and modernized fleet of submarines, surface ships, naval air force (NAF) and (potentially) a light aircraft carrier. While these goals seem far distant when looking at the outmoded assets presently within the PRC force, over the long term and coupled with significant economic growth, China will eventually become "a" or "the" power player in the Asian-Pacific region.<sup>13</sup>

#### Taiwan

Taiwan maintains its pragmatic approach to solving problems. Continued economic growth, acceptance in world diplomatic and economic circles, and molding its relationship with the PRC are central to Taipei's national goals. Often economic opportunity for foreign investment has provided the occasion for welding semi-formal diplomatic relationships. The latter reflects Taiwan's adoption of "flexible diplomacy" whereby "substantial" versus "formal" relations are established.<sup>14</sup>

Taipei also recognizes it's tenuous security situation with regards to the PRC. Taiwan spends over 30% of it's national budget on defense. The country continues to maintain a 50,000 man force on Quemoy and a 20,000 man force on Matsu poised toward mainland China where it has invested billions and has developed one of the most modern military forces in the region to provide a viable forward defense. Taipei remains gravely concerned over the anticipated civil unrest on the mainland when Deng Xiaoping dies.<sup>15</sup>

## Philippines

Instability on the economic and internal security fronts, which are deeply interdependent, have plunged the Philippines into a morose state. Forty percent of the national budget is used in paying off foreign debt. The economy actually shrank 1% last year.<sup>16</sup> The Sept 16, 1991 rejection of the new U.S. base treaty by the Philippine Senate, while providing a sense of nationalism, has further caused concern in investor's minds about whether the Philippine economy is a secure place for their capital. Undermining any effective government action is a political system with 124 political parties and wide spread corruption.<sup>17</sup> Thus the potential for a military coup to provide stability remains a very real possibility.

## Vietnam (SRV)

Vietnam has been fundamentally left isolated by the U.S. lead economic embargo, and was further segregated from the world economy with the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and USSR. With concern over relationships with its historic border antagonist, China, and other Asian neighbors due to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, Hanoi slipped the Cambodian milestone in 1991 in order to bring itself back into the SE Asian economic trade circle. And with the economy in shambles, the SRV is now redirecting itself ideologically toward a market economy to combat 80% inflation. However, it does not appear Vietnam is fully willing to reduce its defense budget in favor of greater economic initiatives, and thus will continue to be viewed with suspicion.<sup>18</sup> This concern is further fostered by Hanoi's steadfast claims to the Spratly and Paracel Islands.

## Australia

Central to Canberra's national objectives are the ideas of self-reliance in national defense and involvement with Asian regional affairs.<sup>19</sup> The significance of the latter is a reflection of Australia's geographic isolation coupled with her non-ethnic Asian populace which have made her position less than advantageous in the promotion of trade in the region.

The issue of defense policy is more complicated. Simply put, in the past Canberra has based its security upon "great and powerful friends," namely Britain and the U.S. The sheer size of the continent versus the population tended to dictate such a reliance. However, the combination of nationalism and Australia's interpretation of the Guam Doctrine has since nurtured Canberra's self-reliance platform.<sup>20</sup> In spite of this policy, it is interesting to note Australia's quick actions to join the U.S. Desert Shield naval commitment prior to the U.N. invoking Article 51 of the United Nations Charter - defense of U.N. commitments. Canberra once again demonstrated it's historic deference to U.S. causes in the face of potential alienation of its many moslem neighbors in the region.<sup>21</sup>

## Malaysia

Malaysia is a country which over the past five years has begun to realize some of its long term national goals, to wit, an economic growth averaging over 8% the past five years and improved internal stability.<sup>22</sup> The latter is significant in view of the active insurgent force of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) which after 41 years of disrupting the country laid down their arms in 1989. Stability remains a concern. While the historic threats have been from Thailand, Burma

and Indonesia; the China card is of greater concern. Malaysia has a large (31%) ethnic Chinese minority which the indigenous Malaysian has always viewed with deep suspicion. Additionally, the Chinese Navy's growth is viewed with alarm with its ever growing blue water capability.<sup>23</sup> This aspect is most disturbing to the Malaysians in view of their geography (two large land masses spread over 1,200 miles with 400 miles of open sea in between) and Malaysia's claims to portions of the oil rich Spratly Islands (the third national objective) which, among others, is contested by China. But while this maritime threat would infer that Malaysia would be strengthening its Navy and Air Force (the government made a major overture to Britain to buy Tornado aircraft and Oberon submarines), the Army, which is the senior Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) service, has politically maneuvered to divert funding to a MAF mechanized rapid deployment force.<sup>24</sup> Thus there appears to be a mismatch between strategy and force structure.

### Indonesia

With the fifth largest population in the world (topping 190 million) and sprawling across 3,000 miles, Indonesia is a factor in S.E. Asia stability. But for all its size, Indonesia has tended to insulate itself. Jakarta's national objectives have basically been to have "economic growth, stability and avoid foreign policy initiatives."<sup>25</sup> The former has been realized with 6-7% economic growth. Internal stability has been more elusive with several ethnic clashes in East Timor and Aceh as well as a general mistrust between the moslem majority and the large ethnic Chinese minority.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding foreign relations, Indonesia just 2 years ago re-established diplomatic relations with China after 23 years. Some

would say this initiative was brought about by a desire for an effective diplomatic means of resolving regional problems. Others might argue more convincingly it was to promote trade. More important is the bottom line. There remains a fundamental distrust between the two countries. A former Canadian ambassador to both Indonesia and China cites the projection that with the resolution of the Cambodian problem, Vietnam might ultimately join ASEAN and Indonesia would very probably attempt to establish relations with Vietnam to promote trade. China, on the other hand, might see such a union as threatening in view of Vietnam's long standing difficulties with China and influence Jakarta by inciting Indonesia's ethnic Chinese. 27

#### Singapore

Singapore's lifeblood is it's international commerce and manufacturing. However, Singapore is dependent on even its most basic resources. A country composed of 80% ethnic Chinese, this city-state finds itself precariously wedged between two major moslem populaces, Malaysia and Indonesia. These key factors provide the foundation for both Singapore's national and military objectives.

Singapore's water supply, and to a lesser degree food sources, emanates from Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur could quite literally turn the spigot off, or threaten to, as a means of influencing Singapore. This coupled with Singapore's long standing concerns with possible Malaysian Islamic fervor has resulted in a national budget which reflects the highest per capita defense spending save the U.S., Israel and a few oil rich countries. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) at 310,000 boast one of the most modern, capable and well trained forces in South East Asia. This is not a luxury, however. For while the Malaysian Armed



Forces (MAF) numbers only 185,000 and are significantly less capable, Singapore (as a small island nation) must not only be able to deter invasion, but be able to provide a strike capable (potentially pre-emptive) to seize 80 km into peninsular Malaysia to secure control of Singapore's water source, and then hold it. Additionally, Singapore could potentially need to open up a second front in East Malaysia with its entree with Brunei. While there have been some recent warming trends between Singapore and Malaysia, this occurrence has historically been cyclical.<sup>28</sup>

Singapore's relationship with Indonesia has demonstrated a consistent warming over a period of time. This bright spot in regional stability can be directly attributed to Jakarta's perceived benefits from Singapore as a major investor in their economy as well as an important business service center for Indonesia.<sup>29</sup> However, Singapore cannot discount the future potential of an Islamic factor, nor the consequences of a swelling Indonesian population of over 190 million.

### CHAPTER III

#### U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS AND MILITARY STRATEGY

Taken from the President's National Security Strategy of the United States, the U.S. national interests are : (1) the survival of the country as a free and independent nation, (2) a healthy and growing U.S. economy, (3) cooperative relations with allies and friends, and (4) a stable and secure world where economic freedom and democracy flourish. These interests have been translated into a U.S. military

strategy which encompasses strategic deterrence to dissuade an enemy's use of weapons of mass destruction, a forward presence to demonstrate our commitment to allies while influencing others, a crisis response capability should deterrence fail in a regional scenario and, failing the preceding three, reconstitution of forces to a level capable of meeting a global threat. Before proceeding on, one must fully recognize that in our future environment of reduced force levels, we must be able to meet our national interests and objectives within the pillars of strategic deterrence, forward presence and the lower half of crisis response. This philosophy is premised on the U.S. projected force size and national nature. The response to indications and warnings involving foreign diplomatic and military intentions has been woefully lacking historically. While one could hope this will change, the unclear and rapidly changing independent national agendas which are no longer bridled to a bipolar world do not bode well for the U.S.'s future ability to effectively anticipate potential crises.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### OUR PREVIOUS AND FUTURE ASIAN-PACIFIC STRATEGY

To provide a perspective, the total U.S. military Pacific area, to which the Asian-Pacific is central, covers 52% of the earth's surface and includes 42 countries. Yet the U.S. military structure composes only 17% of the entire U.S. active duty military.<sup>30</sup>

The Asian-Pacific region tends to be a theatre of either bilateral or ineffectual defense relationships. SEATO had a very short and

ineffective life span. The Five Power Defense Arrangement was "intended from the beginning more to keep open channels of communications between the armed force of Singapore and Malaysia than reflect any clear-cut mutual defense interests"<sup>31</sup> between the five members (Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore). The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) composed of Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines "disavows any collective military role, partly for fear of antagonizing Vietnam and partly because the other members fear domination by Indonesia, which has by far the largest military among the membership."<sup>32</sup> It is apparent such multilateral alliances do not work well in the Pacific because each nation tends to have conflicting goals and a different set of enemies than his fellow Asian neighbor.

Conversely, virtually every country in the region sees our presence as a balancing force between those with and those without great military power, providing regional stability which has promoted economic growth. Thus one can say that while each individual nation either does not necessarily need or desire an alliance with the others, nearly all countries need or want our presence. In essence our presence is the glue that holds regional stability together. Thus the U.S. has tended not to have a grand policy for the region, but rather multiple bilateral arrangements.

The analyses of the regional nations provided in Chapter II allows us to examine the objectives of the various individual nations of the region so that we might now determine what U.S. objectives will meld with theirs to our mutual benefit. This aspect of being mutually beneficial is not merely 'a nice to have' condition. For it is through

this commonality of benefit that our strategies find themselves most effective and able to weather the test of crisis.

#### Pre-1991 Strategy

The previous military strategy in the region centered on a threat of a bipolar world. Strategic deterrence and force disposition were poised around the possibility of confronting an enemy on a global scale. The Pacific was an economy of force theatre.

A pillar of the U.S. Pacific strategy was the U.S. base system in the Western Pacific. With major installations and forces of all services positioned in mainland Japan, the ROK, Okinawa, the Philippines and Guam; the U.S. focus in the event of hostilities was clearly placed on containment followed by bringing the fight to the Soviet Union and the DPRK, and precluding potential PRC involvement. A nuclear deterrence capability beyond the strategic forces was provided in theatre in view of the potential threat and the predicated response time. Additionally, a high level of force deployment was maintained overseas.

#### Asian-Pacific Strategy of the Future

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the potential for global hostilities has significantly decreased. The challenge now is the threat of regional conflicts brought on by nations seeking their own national interests and no longer inhibited by the alliances of the cold war.<sup>33</sup> Thus the U.S. national strategy has been refocused toward a regional outlook. In the Pacific the U.S. strategy was also greatly effected by the Philippine Senate's rejection of the revised U.S. Base Agreement. This latter occurrence, however, may be far better for the U.S.'s long term interests as we refocus ourselves toward a broader regional perspective, notably SE Asia.

### -Strategic Deterrence

With the lessening of the nuclear threat from the FSU, the U.S. has embarked on the bold initiative of withdrawing nuclear weapons from the soil of our allies as well as naval units which forward deploy. This action has provided broad benefits. We have removed a perceived threat to the region which has been used by certain parties to rationalize the proliferation of nuclear weapons systems. The removal of these weapons from our overseas bases has also eliminated a contentious domestic issue for our allies.

While our initiative has indeed aided in regional stability, it is not a panacea. The PRC has continued to sell ballistic missiles and aid in nuclear weapons programs to countries within the Middle East and South Asia. The DPRK likewise has a missile sales program with countries of the Middle East. Pyongyang also continues to stiffarm and delay her commitment to nuclear facilities inspections under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to which she is a signature. While there is specific concern with the Yongbyon facility being used to reprocess nuclear fuel, there is even greater concern with the possibility of similar North Korean facilities not yet identified. In the case of the PRC, the U.S. is attempting to diplomatically influence Beijing with linkage of this issue, among others, to the extension of China's Most Favored Nation designation. The DPRK's intransigence is also being addressed diplomatically, but through the third party offices of the FSU, PRC, and Japan, as well as the U.N. to which the DPRK most recently joined.<sup>34</sup>

### -Forward Presence

Perhaps the question most often asked by Asian-Pacific diplomatic

and military leaders is whether the U.S. will retain its presence role in the region in light of the change in the world power balance and U.S. fiscal problems at home. Such concerns reflect an unambiguous desire for U.S. involvement as a catalyst for stability. From the U.S. perspective, such forward presence allows us to bolster friendly relations, influence those that are not, be prepositioned for potential crises, and afford us the opportunity to develop relations leading to access to ports, airfields, air space, maintenance facilities and sustainment bases.

Our new presence reflects a total regional focus anchored to the north by Japan and Korea, and to the south with Singapore and her SE Asia neighbors. The Army will retain its ground forces in Korea, with some reductions. And as the threat from the DPRK hopefully lessens, the character of the Army forces will change from their peninsular defensive posture to a NE Asia regional stabilizing force.<sup>35</sup> This force structure will not only provide for a DPRK contingency capability to build upon, but also allay the fear of Japan, Korea, and China regarding any one of the others' adventurism in view of potential U.S. involvement. In consonance with the forgoing and recognizing the ROK's emerging military stature and their domestic sovereignty, a ROK general will head the Combined Forces Command and the U.S.-ROK Combined Field Army will be disestablished by the end of 1992.<sup>36</sup> Also, U.S. forces headquarters will be phased out of the capital of Seoul to other locations.

Navy forward combat presence in the region is being increased and modernized. With the arrival of an LHA in her new homeport of Sasebo, Japan this October, the U.S. will have the capability to employ a complete

Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) with its full air arm versus the previous capability which was restricted to a surface only landing of a battalion landing team. The small deck carrier USS MIDWAY has been replaced by the large deck carrier USS INDEPENDENCE. And while the ship repair, supply and sustainment facilities in the Philippines are being terminated this year, Singapore has agreed to the establishment of a U.S. supply and sustainment base with access to commercial ship repair facilities. The latter capability coupled with potential similar ship repair contract agreements with other SE Asian nations will provide a significant capability with locations that will afford a broader regional focus. Additionally, such U.S. participation over the envisioned large cross section of SE Asia will further enhance regional stability due to increased and balanced involvement with the various countries. The associated increased Navy presence in SE Asia should also provide a secondary stabilizing effect on the Spratly and Paracel Islands issue. Marine forces will retain their wing, division and FSSG structure; thus little effecting their operational capability.

Despit. Mount Pinatubo, the Air Force remains forward deployed and committed. The force remains modern as exemplified by the recent addition of F-16 Lantirn (low-altitude navigation targeting infrared for night) capability. Access to airfields and air space is being expanded upon, most notably in the Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia areas.

SOC PAC (Special Operations Command, Pacific) forces have not been attrited in the Pacific, but their disposition of units has been significantly altered by the closure of the Philippine bases. The fixed wing portion of the SOW (Special Operations Wing) joined the Army's 1/1 in Okinawa. The rotary wing portion became based in Korea. While

the Naval Special Warfare Unit ONE is being moved to Guam.

The foregoing, however, should not lead one to conclude that the total forward presence for any service will be nearly as great as in the past. Clearly, the Army numbers will go down in Korea. Navy forces deploying from CONUS will be reduced in numbers and frequency as the enhanced overseas homeported amphibious ready group and carrier battle group take on more forward deployed presence roles vice their traditional contingency and additive force role. The loss of Clark AB will not be compensated for by another base. Rather the key elements of 13th Air Force are being composited into existing Pacific base structures and the remainder returned to CONUS. The Marine Corps will face some reductions, however, they should be small and horizontal from the operational level of view.

#### -Crisis Response

When Adm Larson, CINCPAC, was asked what flash points he saw within his area of responsibility, he responded with the Korean peninsula, Spratly Islands, Cambodia and India/Pakistan.<sup>37</sup> One might easily translate Cambodia to Vietnam with her expansionist outlook on SE Asia, and add the Philippines' unstable political system which could potentially result in a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) of 40,000 people.

What the foregoing should lead one to conclude is that the smaller U.S. forward presence force structure will demand the employment of joint operations to meet virtually any crises or contingency operation. The regional focus, distances between major U.S. base structures, size of available forces, and the maritime aspect of the Asian-Pacific region will dictate interoperability.

The foregoing should also lead one to realize that a portion



of the fiscal savings afforded by a smaller forward presence force needs to be identified for the potential deployment of CONUS based forces during the early indications and warning stages of a potential crisis. To do otherwise is to indulge the nation in false economy.

As a separate issue, SOCPAC force dispersal appears to have been driven more by service component space availability and foreign political considerations (Okinawan insistence on minimal force structure increase on the island) than operational responsiveness. With the exception of 1/1 and the fixed SOW, the other forces are more widely dispersed than ever before, significantly effecting the maintenance of unit and interoperability proficiency. Perhaps more importantly, the effects of weather, in a region noted for its extended typhoon season, can potentially preclude the timely marshalling of the required force composition due to the wide dispersal of forces.

#### -Reconstitution

Reconstitution merits serious study within the Pacific theatre in view of the very real possibility that this region may be the catalyst for the requirement. The majority of NE Asian defense intellectuals believe that the present US-FSU and Sino-Soviet relationships will eventually break down over the course of the next one to two decades.<sup>38</sup> Potentially adding to the problem is Beijing's and Seoul's deep seeded suspicion of Japan as she seeks her new leadership role, potentially with an offensive military capability, that will eventually conflict with China's and Korea's interests.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, Tokyo concerns itself with a strong China and unified Korea, bolstering with nationalism and deep memories of the past.<sup>40</sup> Contrasting such scenarios against the projected 8 to 10 year warning time required to reconstitute large

forces raises serious concerns of whether we can identify the indications and warnings in sufficient time, and whether we have the national will to take such precautionary fiscal measures. Additionally, two other inherent shortcomings to reconstitution will be the questionable proficiency of our future military leaders to exercise command and control over such size forces which they have never experienced, and the ability of the U.S. industrial base to mobilize them after the majority of our defense sector has transitioned to the non-defense market.<sup>41</sup> These factors require weighty reflections and considerable review before the concept of reconstitution is bought off.

#### -Burden Sharing

While not one of the "foundations" of the U.S. military strategy, burden sharing does play a major role in our deliberations on strategic defense (Britain and France), forward presence (access to facilities), crisis response (allies bearing arms or providing support towards common causes) and reconstitution (allies augmentation of capital assets or resources towards U.S. force structure). We of course have no direct control of another nation's armed forces. It will be their national will that determines whether that nation will employ forces toward a U.S. goal. However, we do seem to have more influence than may be appreciated over what weapon systems and forces a friendly country develops. We will examine the concept of burden sharing with three Asian-Pacific countries: Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

Japan is searching for its niche in world leadership and defense burden sharing, but appears to be adrift between a populace will that desires to distance itself from military power (or paying for it), its major ally (the U.S.) pressuring Tokyo to undertake more initiative

and Asian neighbors who remain skeptical of why Japan would be increasing its military capability. In 1981 Tokyo accepted from the U.S. the defensive role to secure a maritime zone out to 1,000 miles from mainland Japan. During the decade of the 80's , Japan built its forces to 60 destroyers (more than twice 7th Fleet's force), 100 P-3C's (over four times the U.S. P-3's in the Western Pacific) and 300 fighters (about the number we have to defend the continental U.S.). Yet the critics continue to denounce Japan because it spends just over one 1% of GNP on defense versus the U.S.'s 6%. Do we want Japan to build carriers or develop a nuclear capability? Will these enhance stability in the region?<sup>42</sup> Do we want Tokyo to pay more for forward deployed U.S. force structure in the Pacific? Adm Mauz, a former 7th Fleet commander, cautions that with payment comes the potential for a voice in U.S. policy. Thus we have a dilemma of what we want Japan to do. Potentially one solution is not to have Japan increase GNP defense spending, but rather refocus funds to offset the balance of trade iniquity which is at the fundamental root of American criticism.

Over the past ten years, Korea has taken significant strides in upgrading and modernizing its military force. However, having received mixed U.S. signals of what the threat was, Seoul is proceeding with the purchase of 209 class submarines. Clearly this purchase does not counter any critical aspect of the DPRK war threat. However, it does provide concern to Korea's neighbors, Japan and China, over what role these potential choke point weapons systems might be employed in. Conversely, it would appear that the Korean purchase of heavy ground assets such as tanks and artillery would be more germane to the primary DPRK threat, especially in view of the U.S. Army's and Marine Corps'

lightness in this area for defense of Korea. Also, in view of the U.S.'s overall lightness in such weapon systems throughout the region, the potential for a coalition effort wherein ROK heavy ground systems were available for military action elsewhere in the region would dramatically contribute to the combined force effort.

Taiwan's strategic location at the air and sea crossroads between the East China Sea, Philippine Sea and South China Sea make her a key player in the Pacific. While without formal diplomatic ties between the two countries, the U.S. remains wedded to Taiwan through the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act which in effect obligates the U.S. to supply defensive weapons to Taipei for the security of the Taiwan Straits.<sup>43</sup> Though we are committed by a 1982 U.S.-PRC joint communique to gradually and eventually terminate support, it is not necessarily in all three parties' interest to do so. Should the U.S. completely terminate support, what would be the effect on regional stability if Taipei turned to Tokyo for arms sales and a perceived military link?<sup>44</sup> What if Taiwan's defensive strategy evolved to encompass weapons of mass destruction? Clearly, our military sales arrangement through the Taiwan Relations Act results in a form of burden sharing providing not only regional stability, but also indirectly influencing the procurement of systems which might provide benefit to the U.S.'s long term strategy.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. Asian-Pacific Military Strategy is meeting the U.S.

national interests of survival in the form of deterrence, promoting the U.S. economy through access to foreign markets, maintaining cooperative relations with allies and preserving regional stability. Our deterrence force policy, which has included the removal of nuclear weapons from overseas bases while maintaining a viable over the horizon capability, has enhanced regional stability and bolstered our key allies' domestic base. Our forward presence has melded with the individual national agendas within the region for the most part, sustaining smaller powers while tempering the ambitions of others. Our crisis response in the form of forward positioned forces of all services, while smaller, are among the most modern and well equipped - capable of responding to an immediate contingency. Our policy for reconstitution can be made viable given a national will to respond early to potentially ambiguous indications and warnings. Burden sharing can be made to improve upon our four national interests if we effectively articulate the requirements to our allies. And finally, our bilateral relations philosophy works in the Pacific. There are, however, four areas that deserve consideration as refinements to our strategy.

Our military exercise program in the Pacific is a cornerstone to forward presence and, to a degree, our crisis responsiveness. In the past the joint exercise plan has involved virtually all allies within the region, but with special emphasis on Korea due to the very real and present threat there. Most recently the U.S. has begun to shift its focus away from Korea (beyond those exercises canceled by ROKDPRK unification talks) and focus the preponderance of exercises on Japan. While such moves may be advantageous in the promotion of diplomatic goals between the two countries, it has questionable overall

benefit from a regional perspective. One of the intended benefits of combined exercises is the promotion of interoperability to response to crisis. The likelihood that Japan would join the U.S. in any regional conflict is extremely low. No better case can be made than Desert Storm. Additionally, the probability that any Asian neighbor would welcome Japan's participation in a regional conflict is even lower. And, finally, the expansion of Japanese military exercises (albeit with the U.S.) gives rise to Asian neighbor concerns over what the final Japanese objective is. I would propose a more balanced approach toward joint-combined exercises across the spectrum of countries within the region.

Our relationship with the Philippines was noticeably absent during the discussion of forward presence. The U.S. appears to have taken on an attitude of distancing itself from, if not snubbing, the Philippines following the Sept 91 Philippine Senate vote. The U.S. still retains interests there, none the least being airfield access, air space clearance and the potential use of military training sites. Additionally, the perennial instability of the Philippine government always portends the possibility for a NEO situation in which host nation cooperation is always critical. We should openly promote cooperation and dialogue between the two countries even as we withdraw our forces.

Our regional realignment is now focused toward Singapore and her SE Asian neighbors as a southern anchor. It would seem appropriate to also take a broader view towards a potential fallback position and proceed with appropriate preparatory action now. The specific recommendation would be to explore and expand our relations with Northern and Western Australia. While some distance from the U.S.'s main focus

in the region, Australia affords a historically reliant ally, a government with shared values and a vast open area and coastline for extensive training areas. From the bilateral perspective, such a proposal would greatly enhance Australia's self-defense posture and fiscally ease Canberra's development of a military support structure in the West.

While previously addressed under "crisis response", the disposition of SOCPAC forces within the Pacific is cause for concern and further discussion. The wide dispersal of the various service component forces should bring alarm to those responsible for contingency operations. Action to redirect the present plan must come swiftly before structure is built which will make changes a fiscal impossibility. As an example, Guam is presently undertaking final planning to execute a \$16M MILCON project to support Navy Seals. Once this MILCON is complete, the Seals will be permanently cemented to that location.

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